

# Chapter 7. Resources

*The DHEC Division of Community Health is grounded in a community-based approach to health promotion and disease prevention, through partnerships with the private sector, research centers, volunteer organizations, and the faith community. Such collaborations are driven by financial constraints, common sense, and the principles of sound community health.*

## DHEC Resources

### DHEC District Health Promotion Teams

Each health district in South Carolina has a health promotion team which is part of DHEC Community Health. The teams' work at the local level includes promoting good nutrition and physical activity, preventing smoking or encouraging smoking cessation, restricting tobacco smoking in public places, and increasing restaurant menus' healthy food choices. DHEC health promotion teams in each district are grounded in a community organization approach to health risk behavior change. The community approach involves a wide range of health professionals and institutions, community groups, and private citizens.

### Nutrition and Exercise Programs

DHEC Community Health promotes the National Cancer Institute's Five-A-Day program, a nationwide initiative to encourage Americans to consume at least five servings of fruit and vegetables every day. Five-A-Day advertisements are carried in grocery stores throughout South Carolina.

## Physical Activity

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness is a committee appointed by the Governor to promote physical activity. The council currently recommends that everyone get at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day. In addition, the council is working with the Department of Education to train future physical education teachers to teach lifetime physical activities (activities that can be continued on an individual basis).

Another physical fitness initiative is a collaboration with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism to plan good, safe walking trails for the state of South Carolina.

## Healthy Communities

The Healthy Communities Initiative at DHEC is a specially focused effort to increase community involvement in local health problems. The Initiative's ultimate goals are to empower people to improve their individual and collective health, and to empower communities to alter the physical and social conditions that directly affect the community's health. To accomplish this, the public health practitioner serves as a facilitator and resource for community groups, rather than a direct provider of services.

# ***American Cancer Society***

The American Cancer Society (ACS) serves as a catalyst to bring together agencies and organizations involved in health promotion. In South Carolina, ACS continues to expand its grassroots efforts in research, education, advocacy and service. ACS has educational materials available on all cancers and provides educational programs to the public on breast and cervical cancer, tobacco control, prostate cancer, skin cancers and worksite wellness programs.

For schools, ACS provides programs on topics including tobacco, nutrition and basic cancer information. "Changing the Course" encourages school food services to serve healthy food to children. The program has a complete, graded curriculum for classrooms. ACS also sponsors the Healthy Schools/Healthy South Carolina Network, a coalition of individuals, agencies, and organizations dedicated to advocating for the eight components of a healthy school for all schools in South Carolina.

ACS also maintains a comprehensive listing of state and local rehabilitation resources and financial resources to assist cancer patients and their families.

The Cancer Response System provides information on state and local rehabilitation resources for cancer patients and their families, including Road to Recovery, Reach to Recovery, and cancer support groups.

## **Collaborations**

### **ASSIST**

The American Stop Smoking Intervention Study (ASSIST) is a tobacco use prevention effort

conducted in seventeen states and funded by the National Cancer Institute and the American Cancer Society. The goal of Project ASSIST is to reduce the burden of smoking related diseases, including lung cancer, heart disease and chronic obstructive lung disease, through policy and advocacy interventions to reduce smoking in the adult population. ASSIST also seeks to reduce the number of young people who initiate smoking by 50%.

### **Best Chance Network**

The Best Chance Network, a collaborative program between DHEC and the American Cancer Society, provides free breast and cervical cancer screening tests to South Carolina women (primarily women 50 and over) who meet income guidelines and do not have insurance to pay for these tests. This program is funded through the Centers for Disease Control.

### **Southern Appalachia Leadership Initiative on Cancer (SALIC)**

SALIC's major goal is to improve cancer prevention and control among rural Appalachian areas in the Carolinas and Georgia. SALIC is conducted by the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service at NC State University, in association with other Extension Service programs at the University of Georgia and Clemson. Other South Carolina participants include DHEC, the American Cancer Society, the Greenville Hospital System and the USC School of Public Health. SALIC works to reduce barriers to cancer prevention and control, such as lack of available or accessible primary health care, transportation, ability to pay for services, and lack of knowledge and understanding of cancer. The Initiative has formed coalitions on the community levels to enable residents of rural Appalachian communities to act on their own to decrease cancer incidence and mortality.

# ***Community Organizations***

## **US Too**

US Too is a national prostate cancer support organization active in South Carolina. They have been active in encouraging men to seek early detection, in lobbying for quality testing and quality treatment, in public education, in providing men with accurate information regarding their treatment options and in serving as patient advocates.

## **Women's Cancer Coalition**

The purpose of the Women's Cancer Coalition (WCC) is to help reduce the severe impact of cancer on all women in our state, from both loss of quality of life and from death. The WCC's main goals are to educate women to be informed users of health care services and to improve the services available to women in cancer prevention and care. These goals aim to: 1) help empower all women to practice preventive self-care, 2) educate them about the importance of early detection, and 3) teach them how to be their own best health advocate. WCC membership includes over 270 medical and health care professionals, cancer survivors and citizen advocates from throughout South Carolina. Some of the initiatives the WCC completed in 1997 are summarized below:

- Developed a brochure targeted to physicians and nurses, reinforcing the screening and educational messages for breast, colorectal, lung, and cervical cancer.
- Developed and distributed a survey to help identify untapped resources for breast and cervical cancer screening in South Carolina.

- Introduced and supported a new cancer resource database under development by the American Cancer Society
- Worked to gather more than 1,400 signatures in support of the SC Genetics Privacy Act, which was passed into law in June, 1998

## **Mammography Coalition**

This coalition, founded in 1995, coordinates education and awareness activities to increase mammography utilization among women 50 and older in South Carolina. Membership includes American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), ACS, Medicare, the Governor's Office on Aging, the SC Office of Insurance Services, and the state employee's wellness group.

## ***Cancer Information Service (CIS)***

This service is a network of 22 offices supported by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). They operate a toll-free telephone line staffed by specialists who provide accurate, current information on cancer to patients and their families, health professionals, and the public. Staff speak both English and Spanish. The Cancer Information Service (CIS) also develops local resource directories of cancer-related services and programs and provides outreach to high-risk and underserved people such as African-Americans, Hispanic people over 65 and people with low-literacy levels. DHEC has collaborated with CIS since 1992. The CIS line provides information about the Best Chance Network (BCN), including eligibility criteria and local BCN providers. CIS is the major link between the BCN's outreach efforts and service delivery, and provides information critical to evaluation of BCN's outreach efforts.

# Cancer Information On-Line

The Internet provides a wealth of information to public health and health care professionals, ranging from news updates, journal abstracts and articles, raw data, grant opportunities, to information about current clinical trials in South Carolina. There are literally thousands of web sites related to cancer, with varying degrees of reliability, and the volume of information out there can be overwhelming. The most reliable sources of information are usually sites sponsored by established research institutes (National Cancer Institute, Centers for Disease Control), university-based research hospitals (University of Pennsylvania, Harvard, MUSC), or groups like the American Cancer Society. The websites below are a starting point - they are not meant to be endorsements. Most public and university libraries provide access to the Internet and the Resources Chapter of *Informed Decisions*, (American Cancer Society, 1997) provides an excellent introduction to the Internet for beginners - some of these descriptions are taken from that source.

## American Cancer Society

(<http://www.cancer.org/>)

Information about cancer, including statistics, patient and family counseling, medical costs and other subjects. Also provides information about local ACS divisions, publications, and meetings and links to other sites on the Web.

## Oncolink (<http://www.oncolink.com>)

Sponsored by the University of Pennsylvania Cancer Center Resource, this web site offers detailed descriptions of various cancers and medical specialties; news developments; stories by cancer survivors; information about causes and prevention of cancer; current clinical trials; and information about insurance and financial assistance, along with links to a variety of other web sites

## National Cancer Institute (<http://www.cancer.gov/>)

The federal government's on-line cancer resource, offering a wide range of information and news reports. Especially useful is information about using CancerNet with updates on clinical trials, drug testing protocols and research projects, including all NCI trials in South Carolina.

## MedWeb:Oncology ([http://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Med/Cancer/medweb\\_o.htm](http://www.arts.cuhk.edu.hk/Med/Cancer/medweb_o.htm))

Very thorough directory of Web links to cancer databases, documents, treatment facilities, journals, and patient's guides.

## MUSC (<http://act.musc.edu/>)

This site provides an up-to-date listing of clinical trials being conducted at the Medical University of South Carolina.